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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

World conference on human rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

II. VIEWS SUBMITTED BY GOVERNMENTS

JAMAICA

The Ministry on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica sumbitted the following information:

"The Ministry is of the opinion that the United Nations has been the driving force behind initiatives to improve the standards of human life globally. It would therefore be appropriate for any international conference on human rights to be held under the auspices of the United Nations.

"The Ministry notes that the United Nations has been responsible for the comprehensive formulation and codification of the rules and norms of international law surrounding human rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

"These documents represent the generally accepted international standards of human rights and freedoms that must be adopted and established with varying degrees of success in different countries.

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"While there is general acceptance of the standards laid down by the United Nations, developing countries in particular are unable, although not necessarily unwilling, to achieve the standards, especially economic ones, being set out because of a lack of resources to enable them to do so.

"These developing countries find it difficult to meet the most basic needs of their peoples, such as the right to food (article 25 - Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and the right to work and the right to an adequate standard of living (articles 6 and 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, respectively).

"The Ministry recognizes that the ability of a country to achieve a high standard of respect for human rights within that State bears a direct relation to the economic resources available to it. The fact has been alluded to in article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

"It has been acknowldeged that the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights can only be achieved if there is economic development in countries suffering some of the worst abuses.

"It is important therefore for a forum to be devised to look at the long-term fulfilment of the aims and standards of the United Nations through the formulation of proper human development strategies that include programmes for the requisite economic development of the less developed countries.

"The sweeping changes across Eastern Europe must also be considered as a catalyst for the renewal of efforts to promote higher standards of respect for human rights in these countries. The democratization of these States makes it imperative that they be encouraged to achieve international standards in according the fullest respect for fundamental rights and freedoms of their peoples.

"There is also a need to look at the difference between the United Nations standards and those of the other regional Conventions, such as the Council of Europe's European Convention on Human Rights and its Five Protocols and the Organization of American State's American Convention on Human Rights. These Conventions must be examined with a view to consolidating the regional standards of human rights and United Nations standards in order to achieve the goals set out above.

"The Ministry believes that this forum would also be appropriate at this time, because it would provide an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the changes and developments in human rights throughout the world over the past 20 years.

"It is therefore submitted that Jamaica would support the convening of a world conference on human rights as proposed by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/156 of 15 December 1989."